



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol.6.Issue.2.2019 (Apr-June)



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

SIGNIFICANCE OF R.K. NARAYAN LITERATURE IN TODAY'S ERA

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.6219.23>



ABSTRACT

This research paper will prove that the literature of R.K. Narayan has a great significance for the generation today. Children should be motivated to read novels of R.K. Narayan to get a glimpse of our tradition and value system so that they can live a much happier and content life.

Keyword: Tradition- A custom, relief or way of doing something that has continued from the past to the present, Culture – The customs, ideas, beliefs etc. of a particular society, country etc.

R.K. Narayan is a name in English literature that does not need any introduction. He is a shining star in the Galaxy of Indian fiction writers who have written in English. He received a number of awards and honors including the A C Benson Medal from the Royal Society of Literature, and the Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian award.

His career as a writer spanned over sixty years. Narayan was also nominated to Rajya Sabha, the upper house of India's Parliament. He is widely known for his simple and unpretentious writing style.

R.K. Narayan is a novelist of common men and common situations. His plots are built of those materials and incidents that are neither extraordinary nor heroic. He has selected day to day incidents in his novels that happen to almost every one of us in our life. His heroes are average persons and they do not possess extraordinary capacities.

His characters are neither saints nor sinners but are ordinary men. They commit blunders and face the consequences. Some realize their follies while others feel trapped and are helpless. In the beginning there is discontent and disorder which is followed by the return, renewal and restoration to normal life. Unlike the American fictional heroes who try to escape, Narayan's characters accept life as it is. Acceptance of life is an attribute of Indian way of living.

Narayan believes in the divine intervention in solving the inner conflict of person. The reason behind this is that Indians have deep faith in our religion which stresses on the theory that God is omnipresent and omnipotent. If one surrenders to God, he takes care of him/her and looks after like a parent. Narayan's characters are dependent on God.

R.K. Narayan marvelously represents human relationship and human experience in his writing. One of his greatest achievements is in making India popular all around the world. The relationship between Swami and

his grandmother, Jagan and Mali, Jagan and Grace, the husband wife relation between the hero and his wife in the novel *The English Teacher* etc give immense relaxation and pleasure to readers. In his literature there is a glimpse of Indian family system and relations which is almost invisible today.

Children of present generation have no idea about the richness of Indian culture. They don't realize the importance of various relations in a family. The reason behind this is that they have been confined to a small family system with one or two kids and their parents. They feel attracted towards the so called modernization which is so hollow at the core. Children are forgetting basic moral values because nobody at home is having time to teach them the importance of these values. It is very shameful that foreigners have started realizing the importance of Indian values and our own children are ignorant.

When we read the literature of R.K. Narayan a beautiful picture of Indian way of living and traditions is painted before our eyes. The relationship between Swami and his grandmother is so soothing and refreshing for a growing child who wants to share so many things but because parents today are more concerned about earning, they don't have time to spend and share small things with their child. This has a negative effect on the child who feels depressed and is confined to himself only. The tradition of joint family represented in R.K. Narayan literature is like a dream for child of today's era.

The presentation of Jagan, the vendor of sweets as a widower is heart touching. Jagan who has lost his wife does not get married just because of his son. He feels it more important to take care of his son rather than getting married again and enjoy his life. He takes care of his son in the best possible way. He prepares meals for his son. He takes pride in the physical appearance of his son who is a tall handsome man. In the *English Teacher*, the main hero of the novel does not get married after the death of his wife in order to take care of his only daughter. He loves his wife so dearly that even after his wife's death, he can feel her presence around her. He never feels the need to get married again. Such a long lasting love between husband and wife is rare to find. These things generally happen only in India when a person thinks above his own selfish motives. This is taught to us by our religion. This is the reason why most of Narayan's works show deep interest in Hindu religion and Myth. He himself has admitted his inability to write novels without Krishna, Ganesh, Hanuman, astrologers, pandits and Devdasis.

Indian way of living has an impact on Narayan. The richness of Indian culture and religion is also exhibited in R.K. Narayan literature which can be proved as an asset to the growing children of India. This is the significance of R.K. Narayan literature in recent era where children who prefer to read in English can get an easy glimpse of the tradition and culture of India. Nowhere in his writing has he treated women in a brusque way. Women have been given an important place in his writing whether it is grandmother of Swami, Jagan's wife Ambika, Mali's so called Grace, the wife of the *English Teacher* etc.

To earn publicity so many writers of India who write in English present a very repulsive picture of India. R.K. Narayan has tried his best to present a brighter and beautiful picture of Indian tradition and culture. He has not depicted the ugly side of reality. He has ignored extreme crudities, naked sex descriptions and cruelties. The trio of R.K. Narayan i.e. Swami and his friends, The vendor of sweets and the *English Teacher* is superb in terms of thematic variety and linguistic maturity. Unsocial activities, perversion and physical violence are not found in his fiction. He does not indulge in sensations. He believes in domestic harmony and peaceful relations. He is the only writer in Indo-anglian fiction who is free from propaganda. As a matter of fact he is a pure and simple writer and has no pretensions or ambitions to be recognized as a scholar or idealist.

Narayan is a pure Indian both in spirit and thought. He has presented an authentic picture of life in India through his writing. He creates Indian atmosphere in many ways. His novels describe ancient Indian philosophy and religion. He has described Indian life and the Indian people with rare detachment. His knowledge of Indian classical literature, philosophy, religion and ethics pervade his writings. He does not burden his readers with abstract philosophy. The family values, relationships, traditions which we can find in R.K. Narayan literature cannot be found anywhere else. His creative genius is deeply rooted in ancient Indian religion which gives great importance to nonviolence, self - discipline, renunciation, incarnation, doctrine of rebirth and the law of Karma. All these themes find expression in his novels.

We can conclude that the literature of R.K. Narayan has a great significance for the young generation today who is so much influenced by the so called modern and deformed prevailing culture which dooms them to depression and loneliness. And because English language is the most preferable language for the generation today, we are lucky that we have an author who writes in English and glorifies the Indian culture with utmost sincerity and dedication. R.K. Narayan Literature is really an asset for our generation today. Children should be inspired to read R.K. Narayan literature so that they can get a glimpse of our tradition and value system and can imbibe these values and traditions in their living style.

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